

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE.

Har-Q
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A.L.
no. 159

REPORT

OF COMMITTEE appointed to consider as to changes in MODE OF
GOVERNING AND ADMINISTERING THE COLLEGE.*

27th January, 1873.

To the Council of the Working Men's College:—

Finding that the Council has to be called together, we think it desirable to make a first Report, shewing what progress we have made in the task committed to us by the Resolution of the Council passed on the 24th May last.

We may premise that our Committee was only fully formed in August, the necessary preliminaries for the election authorised by the Council having taken some weeks, and that we accordingly could not meet for business until after the autumn vacation. Since that time we have held meetings, being as many as it was found practicable to hold.

Upon entering on the enquiry before us we found that we were generally agreed that among the changes which could "advantageously be made in the government and administration of the College," one would be a change in the mode by which Students or former Students are introduced into the Council, and that this matter was of pressing importance. The election of Students to be members of the Council has hitherto been connected with the system of examination for Certificates and Associateships, and we were thus led to the consideration of possible changes in this system of examinations, and to the discussion of certain schemes laid before us with this idea by members of the Committee. Upon these schemes we are not yet in a position to report. The plans suggested were in a great degree subsidiary to the purposes of strengthening the administrative or governing bodies in the College, and the discussion of them made it evident that it would be scarcely possible to decide how the examinations could be, in this view, improved, while it remained uncertain what is to be in future the mode of formation of the Council, and what are to be its relations to the Executive or Managing Committee. The position of this Committee, the extent of its powers, and its relations to the Council, have never been defined, and at the present moment it is acting, as the Council knows, under a special resolution which entrusted it, provisionally, with large and exceptional powers. Believing that this provisional state of things should give place as soon as possible to some definite arrangement, we think that it is imperatively necessary that steps should be taken to give some degree of fixity and permanence to the arrangements for perpetuating the governing and administrative bodies. The great changes which have occurred in the *personnel* of the Council seem to us to make this necessity more pressing than it ever was. The existing character and constitution of the College may be said to rest on the tradition, practice, and intention of those who founded it, of their immediate associates, and of the existing body of students, especially the older members of that body. This character, so far as it is thus traditional, must necessarily run great risk of disappearing, and it is of course impossible that any machinery should secure its transmission to

* The resolution of the Council, passed 24th May, 1872, was as follows:—"That the Students of three years standing, and who have attended classes four terms, be requested to elect three of their number to consider, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, and to report to the Council, whether any, and if any what, changes may be advantageously made in the mode of governing and administering the College." The Committee constituted under this Resolution is as follows:—The Vice-Principal (Mr. Brewer), Mr. Bevan, Mr. Catterns, Mr. Forster, Mr. Litchfield, Mr. Martineau, Mr. Mozley, Mr. Murray, Mr. Rawlins, Mr. C. Robinson, Mr. Tausley, and Mr. Cave Thomas.

the future, but we think that the purposes for which the College exists, the character which it is intended to bear, and the special objects at which it aims, as distinguished from those of existing Colleges and Schools should now be placed on record, that it should receive a formal constitution, and that this constitution should be embodied in whatever legal shape is most calculated to give it permanence and security. A paper giving a sketch of such a constitution has been put before us by one of our Committee (Mr. LITCHFIELD), and we think it well to append to our Report a copy of this paper, as explaining, generally, the recommendation now made.

We think also that in connection with the settlement of the legal status of the College, as a public Educational Trust, some definite set of Laws should be drawn up providing for the mode of election of members of the Council. Such laws to include of course provision allowing of their being changed from time to time as circumstances may require.

The Council having thus been definitely constituted—as it has never yet been—(the College having hitherto had no other laws or regulations than such as have been made from meeting to meeting by way of resolution) it would be in a position to make what further changes might seem to be required. What kind of Executive Committee should hereafter be appointed and what should be its functions are questions the answer to which must depend mainly or very much upon the course taken as to filling the posts of Principal and Vice-Principal, a matter which we feel it is hardly within our province to consider. But with regard to this Committee (the Executive) most of us think that if it is to continue to work at all as it now does, the following are points which should be kept in view :

First.—That for the doing of a great part, and a very onerous part, of the work which falls to such a Committee, it will best to avail ourselves more freely and largely than heretofore of the assistance of Students.

Secondly.—That it is expedient that at least some of the Students serving on the Committee be chosen by the direct vote of the whole body of their fellows of, say, two years or three years standing.

Thirdly.—That in the future this Committee should have larger powers than heretofore, and should exercise its authority directly, rather than, as it has hitherto done, by way of recommendation to the Council.

This view assumes that the future constitution and management of the College should be, in outline, as follows :—

- 1.—The Trustees, *i.e.*, the persons (whether incorporated as a Company or however otherwise constituted) in whom the property of the College is legally vested, and with whom must rest, ultimately, the responsibility of seeing that the property is applied, *bonā fide*, to the purposes of a Working Men's College as shewn in the Deed of Trust or Articles of Association. This body to take no part directly in the government of the College, but constitute, in virtue of their trust, the final authority by which any important question on which difference may arise is to be determined.
- 2.—A Council—charged with the government of the College—administering it through
- 3.—Some Executive authority, which authority appears to us to be best exercised by an Executive Committee.

The manner in which for the future members of the Council may best be elected is one of the matters which we are now engaged in considering.

Agreed to at a Meeting of the Committee, held 27th January, 1873.

Signed (by direction of the Committee),

R. B. LITCHFIELD,
Chairman at said Meeting.

I would rather not sign this Report. I do not agree with some of its recommendations, especially those as to the Executive Committee. I am of opinion that as little as possible should be cut and dried until the new Principal is chosen, in order that he may have a chief voice in such arrangements, instead of sliding in a groove already arranged for him.

I am further of opinion that there should be an active Vice-Principal. G. H. E. RAWLINS.